UNITY

An Organ of Reasonable Religion.

"One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves."—*Tennyson.*

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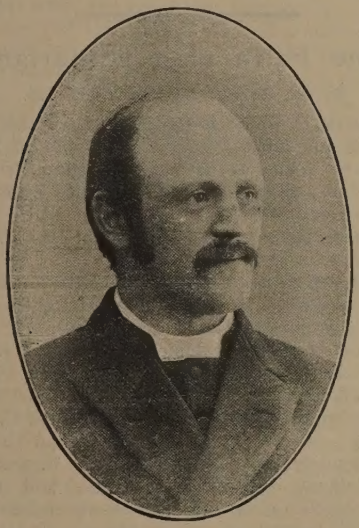

REV. JOHN ELLIS,

DEWSBURY.

The Rev. John Ellis is the District Minister of the Yorkshire Unitarian Union, with special charge of the Dewsbury Church, and the care and oversight of other churches which have no minister, and organiser of the missionary work of the Union. Born at Bradford, Yorks., May 21st, 1862; half-timer in a factory at 8 years; full-timer at 13 years; education began at a National School, continued at Mechanics' Institute. At 15 he found employment in a drapery establishment. His grandfather was the Rev. John Ellis, who ministered at Diss, Billingshurst, Mossley, Yeovil, Elland, and Portsmouth; and he himself, influenced by Rev. Dr. R. Laird Collier to prepare for the ministry, entered the U.H.M. College, 1881, taking the course to 1884, and was a prizeman each year, and Gaskell Scholar at Owen's College, 1885. Minister: Blackley, Manchester, 1885-93; Upperthorpe, Sheffield, 1893-1902; Mansford Street Church and Mission, London, 1902-4; District Minister, Yorkshire U. Union, 1904—. In each of these ministerial spheres he has had a reputation for earnest and solid work and commanded the respect and attachment of his people. Denominationally he rendered valuable services to the cause of reasonable religion as secretary, Missionary Conference, 1888-93; Secretary to Yorkshire Unitarian Union, 1895-1902; Organising Secretary National Triennial Conference at Sheffield, 1897; read a paper at Triennial Conference Leicester, 1900, which led to the establishment of "The National Conference Guild's Union" for young people of which Union he has been Secretary from its formation. Elected to Bethnal Green Borough Council, 1903, and was chairman of group of Evening Continuation Schools under London School Board, 1903, and member, Management Committee of Day Schools. He was organiser, London Guilds Union; of Mansford Working Men's Club; and was president Missionary Conference (1904-5). In his present sphere of labour Mr. Ellis has organised Unitarian Services at Barnsley, Harrogate; courses of lectures at Skipton and Shipley, and helped in the Unitarian Van Mission. He is now concentrating his efforts at Dewsbury and Barnsley. Without being "showy" in manner or ability, Mr. Ellis is one of those persistent workers whose efforts are amongst the most valuable assets for the promotion of a really free Christianity.

Varieties.

A Viking had been converted by Christian Monks and consented to be baptised. As one of the monks was about to perform the ceremony, the Viking exclaimed: "Stay! where said ye that I should pass after death, if I am baptised?" "To heaven, dear brother," replied the Monk joyfully. "And where then are my forefathers; are they also in heaven?" "Not so, dear brother, they are in hell.' "Ha, is it so? No baptism then for me. Whither my good fathers have gone, thither will I go too."

Men may rise on stepping stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.
—Tennyson.

The Immutable God.

By the Rev. JOHN FOX.

We will not sigh for olden times,
When angels talked with men,
Or think that God, in eastern climes,
Was nearer to them then.

We will not think that broken laws
Reveal His power divine;
Or yet proclaim Him more the cause
Of Nature's works sublime.

We will not say that all His truth
One Bible did enfold;
Or that not more would yet come forth,
As time's great scroll unrolled.

But we would see Him everywhere,
And listen to His voice,
Which speaks in all His works so fair,
And bids the heart rejoice.

Those works reveal Him to the mind,
And show His constancy;
He is the same to all mankind,
And evermore shall be.

His inspiration still flows on
To every land and time;
His revelations still have shone
On every age and clime.

True Worship.

And all true worship is that which is in agreement with the Infinite Love. It must be in love to God and love to man; the outcome of a desire to refresh the soul by intercourse with that which is best and highest, to nourish the higher nature with the grandest thoughts, the purest feelings, and the noblest ambitions. It must be in this spirit of love, and it must be in truth.

True worship will not include rite or ceremony that is contradictory to the worshipper's thought of God; it will not consist of words in hymn, psalm, anthem, or prayer, which are a denial of the worshipper's faith; nor will it contain the repetition of any creed which conflicts with the worshipper's vision of the Infinite Justice. To be a worship in Truth it is necessary for it to be in harmony with the conscience and convictions of those who take part. A priest repeating a creed "appointed to be read," but which he no longer believes, is not engaged in true worship. Any person using phrases without meaning, repeating words from mere habit or custom, which his own mind denies—if done in public or private worship, does not worship in spirit and in truth.

True worship must be unselfish. There is no worship in mere self-seeking, in desire only for self-satisfaction. It must be full of love for others, of thought for them, of a feeling that example may encourage and bless those who can be influenced by spiritual comradeship. Love to God is shown by love to fellow-man. "Together," in company, in fellowship, so much more of God may be found than in solitary communion. In each soul something of God is brought. Going to public worship for one's own sake only, needful as it is, is not all it should be; "for the sake of others"—is far better: in that the true worshipper discovers sweetest satisfaction even for himself.

"Let us go into the House of the Lord," that others may follow, that they may delight to meet us there—the young, the wayward, all who look for guidance. Such worship inspired by devoted love to fellow-man is full of love to God. From this any private communion with the Highest will derive its chief efficacy and power. "The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him."

The Faith of a Unitarian.

By the Rev. J. MORLEY MILLS.

That GOD IS ONE; is Spirit; is Love; and is the Father of our spirits: that in every nation he that revereth God, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him; that to such as devoutly walk in the spirit and earnestly seek the highest truth, will be vouchsafed clearer comprehensions of His mind and will.

NOT that God is a "Trinity in Unity"—three persons in one—which doctrine was not taught by Jesus, nor by any of the Prophets of Israel, nor by the Apostles of the New Testament.—Deut. vi., 4. Mark xii., 29. John iv., 24, Acts x., 35. I. Cor. viii., 6.

That JESUS was a great Prophet and Teacher, whose "Gospel of God" was indeed "good tidings of great joy"; whose commandments—Thou shalt love God supremely, and thy neighbour as thyself—when obeyed, elevate duty into blessedness, and supply a motive which prompts to strenuous endeavour for the world's betterment: whose life was a noble sacrifice to the service of humanity, and an example of light and cheer to all: whose heroic death was a heart-touching and soul-thrilling witness to loving fidelity to lofty principles, compelling the conclusion that "truly this man was a son of God": and whose spiritual survival testifies alike to the inextinguishable energy of a life "full of grace and truth," and the unquenchable vitality of a soul animated by the love of God.

NOT that Jesus was "God the Son," to be worshipped; and the Heaven-appointed atonement for the sins of the world, by means of which the Father's wrath should be appeased and man bought off from the Devil, and the believing in which, is the only way of salvation.—Mark i., 14-15; x., 18; xv., 40. Acts ii., 22.

That THE BIBLE contains much of what good men in the past thought about God, and the world, and man's relationships and duties; that these thoughts became truer and more inspiring, morally and spiritually, as the Jewish race evolved from barbarism to the civilization of a higher righteousness and a wider comprehension; that it is of the utmost value to

mankind for its records of religious experience, its inspiring prophesies, its Gospel narratives, and its many passages of comfort and direction.

NOT that it is throughout the infallible Word of God, without error or limitation, and containing the complete revelation of the Infinite Spirit for all time.

That MAN is a child of God: that he can at all times and in every place directly approach the Father to acknowledge his transgressions, and communicate with Him in spirit, as Jesus taught by the Parable of the Prodigal Son, and in the Lord's prayer: That he is created unto good works, and, as he steadily works out in life that which God prompts from within, he will continue to rise in the scale of being, till he realises yet higher ideals, and achieves a glorious destiny.

NOT that man is a fallen creature incapable of any effort after truth and goodness; that he may not have intercourse with God except through a mediator or a priest; and that he is dependent on the blood of the innocent purchasing for him reconciliation with God. —Eph. ii., 10. Phil. ii., 12. II Cor. iv., 17, 18.

That RELIGION is ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well: that it consists in doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God: that it is man's striving to get into right relations with all that is good in the Universe, in Humanity, and with the Divine: that the authority for Religion rests in the human conscience, and its purpose is an ever more perfect obedience to the higher laws of the spirit.

NOT that it is a continuation of the superstitions and outgrown fears of past ages: that its authority rests in a Church or a Book; that it consists in the observance of sacraments, the acceptance of creeds, and the performance of a ceremonial worship.

That SALVATION is deliverance from the sense of guilt produced by sin, and is effected by repenting sincerely of the evil that has been committed, by opening the heart to the love of the Father, and steadily making amends by living a better life: that it is a growing power over selfishness and an increasing at-one-ment with God: that it is the development of every faculty and feeling towards the standard of the perfect man: that, therefore, character is the only test, as it is the only outward indication, of salvation.

NOT that it is a supernatural transference from the power of the Devil to the realm of saintship, in consequence of "only believing" in the merits of a bleeding sacrifice which cost the penitent never a pang of pain.

Isaiah lv., 7. Mat. xi., 29-30. Mat. vii., 21.

That THE FUTURE will depend upon what we are rather than where we are; upon our character, and our desire to love God and do good: that he who has been faithful in the lesser responsibilities of this life will enter into the joy of greater opportunities for knowing God, for doing good, and for growing in His likeness; that he who has been unfaithful, and has thereby injured his own soul, brought sufferings on others, and grieved God ,will suffer the shame, the incapacity, and the misery consequent thereon, until by repentance and amendment he gain peace and purity.

NOT that at death everyone who has not professed belief in a particular dogma will be plunged into a hopeless and eternal Hell; nor that the mere acceptance of the same will give full and free admittance to the selfish and guilt-stained into the purest heaven.

That THE UNCHANGEABLE LOVE OF GOD will be extended to His children throughout eternity; that the door of His mercy will ever be open to the repentant; that the Good Shepherd will seek His lost sheep until He find it; that in the end every wanderer shall find his way into the Father's Home of Love, "that God may be all in all."

A "New Theology" Magazine.

"Unity" might well lay claim to be a "New Theology" periodical,, but it is now styled "rabidly sectarian" by a New Theology organ which is always angry about something or somebody. Now "rabidly" means angrily, or madly. The word is associated with "rabies." Readers of "Unity" will not find much anger in its pages, if any, and if calling a spade a spade is sectarian, then "Unity" must needs plead guilty to the impeachment, for it has never hesitated to say that Unitarianism is Unitarian, even when it is dressed in the guise of Free Catholicism, or "New Theology." It has not sought "to monopolise all truth by stamping a denominational seal upon it" as the aforesaid N.T. magazine represents, but it has persistently sought to show that as Unitarianism stands for absolute freedom of thought, and for freedom to receive all truth that comes, it is the broadest "ism" that exists. It is not "narrow" to say that Unitarianism is wide enough to absorb everything that is true. The success of "Unity" is a proof that its attitude is meeting with ever increasing favour whereas the failure of periodicals which exist to "commend catholic Church ideals" with doctrinal vagueness, or of a New Theology organ like our critic which has always on hand a plentiful supply of spleen and bitterness indicate that something different is wanted.

We note that the organ thus referred to admits it has so far failed to reach the point of self-support, and that the Editors appeal for financial and other aid from their readers. We do not wonder at it. A little more of the Christ-like spirit in its editorials and less of its opposite might command the support that it lacks.

He who rears up one child in Christian virtue, or recovers one fellow creature to God, builds a temple more precious than Solomon's or St. Peter's, more enduring than earth or heaven.—W. E. Channing.

Well I know
That unto him who works, and feels he works,
This same grand year is ever at the doors.
—Tennyson.

What to Teach.

III.—POSSIBILITY AND ENVIRONMENT.

What did Jesus mean when he said: "Ye shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect"? Evidently that perfection is possible. No sane person would ever attempt the impossible. We set the example of the life and character of Jesus before people, but that would be quite without effect if no one believed it possible to be as good as he. And Jesus goes even further: he sets the perfect example of God before us. But who can be equal to God in anything?—it may be asked. It is not possible to be His equal in all things. But that is not what Jesus meant. It is possible for man to be God's equal in some things. There are things which can be done with perfect rightness by men equal to the rightness of God himself. A man may in any single word or deed be as truthful, as perfect as God. Not even the Deity can be more truthful than a simple statement of truth such as: twice two are four. And even a child which does its best according to its ability is perfect in that doing.

We must teach, then, that it is possible to be perfect in what we are and in what we do; that anything we may do may be done perfectly, to the extent of our ability, and that the practice of perfection to that extent develops the power, and therefore the extent of it. What has been done by one man may be done by others. Let us teach our children that. And further, we may enjoin upon them, as Jesus did upon people in his day: "greater things than these shall ye do." The best things so far attained and accomplished by even the best and the greatest amongst men have not reached the best that is attainable. There are finer fish in the sea than have yet been got out of it, and there are finer possibilities in man than have yet been realised. Even Jesus did not exhaust the heights and depths of human possibility. There are Christs yet to be who will do the greater things which Jesus himself prophesied. Taking him for all in all, we shall not look upon his like again—because each man is a different man, and never the same as any other. Shakespeare did not reach the utmost possibility of the poet's faculty nor of the dramatic art. There will be men who will overtop Shakespeare. The final goal has not been arrived at in anything. "The best," as Browning tells us, "is yet to be," and that in all things. Let us teach men so; let us teach it to our young people.

Is not such teaching the greatest inspiration? what can be so encouraging as the vision of possibility? If we teach the uselessness of effort, the inability of human nature, the impossibility of high attainment—the natural result must be that all effort is discouraged and all hope is lost. But teach that no good thing is impossible, that no grand hope is unattainable, that every right thing can be accomplished, and there is infinite stimulus to strive after the highest with the certainty of ultimately reaching it.

Yet no one liveth to himself alone. All men are helpers or hinderers to each other. A man's capacity is limited by opportunity, and opportunity by environment. Ability will show itself if it have the chance. But if it be not permitted to show itself, it is for the time being the same as if it were not. The good seed in unfavourable conditions comes to nothing. It may be so crushed by overcrowding as to reveal no ability whatever. But, planted amid favourable conditions, in which it has room and opportunity, it grows unto its highest and richest and best. This is all true of human ability. The unfavourable conditions may be in the home and family; or in the circumstances of the daily toil; or in the selfish tyranny of "superiors"; or in other unjust domestic, industrial, or social conditions. Every child has an inherent claim to be provided with a favourable environment, agreeable to the development of its best, and also has good ground of complaint if such is denied. Parents and guardians should remember that they form an important part of the environment of those in their care. If they are stumbling-blocks and oppressors, they may blight the souls of the children. If otherwise, they may quicken every true faculty into glorious life.

We need to teach that we are members one of another; that the evil condition of one may contaminate all, and the evil condition of many make the manifestation of good difficult, and in various respects impossible; that each is his brother's keeper; that opportunity for one depends on the good dispositions of the other human beings by whom he is surrounded, and who make his environment what it is. If we can make this clear to the minds of the young, so that they may realise how much depends on what each is and on what each does—in other words, a deep sense of individual responsibility—the way will then be cleared somewhat for a grander race of men and women than has ever existed before.

(Self-possession and Self-control—next.)

Literature.

"Studies in Christian Doctrine," by James Drummond, M.A., LL.D., D.D.; published by Philip Green, 5, Essex Street, Strand, London, E.C. 10/6 net.

This volume by Dr. Drummond is a much-needed book on the subject it treats. Most essays on Christian Doctrine are from the orthodox standpoint, and the writers thereof set out, with foregone conclusions, to find support for their own particular ecclesiastical dogmas; but here is a book by a Christian freethinker, who knows no authority but Truth, and whose one aim is to discover what is the truth, and therefore it should be particularly welcome to all who have the same quest in view. What is the teaching of Christ and the Christian Scriptures—the New Testament—on such subjects as God, Christ, Man, the Bible, the Church, Religion, the Means of Grace, the Future Life? These questions are answered in these chapters. The author brings to bear on every portion of this work the resources

of his wide knowledge and scholarly attainments. Speaking for himself and his co-religionists, Dr. Drummond says in his preface: "We have no authoritative creed to which individual thought must bow. We all alike have but one aim, Truth; and truth presents itself in many partial phases to differently constituted minds. There are diversities of opinions, but one Spirit; and all faithful souls are moving, on different sides, towards one luminous peak, where Truth stands transfigured in heavenly light, far above the fogs and doubts of earth." These words indicate the spirit of the book, which is a considerable volume of over 500 pages, with full table of contents, as well as a detailed index of subjects. The "Studies" were mainly composed as lectures to students at Manchester College, where until recently the author was Principal and successor of Dr. James Martineau. We can with confidence commend the work as a most helpful guide to earnest inquirers, and all the more so because of its freedom from bias, its calmness and fairness of tone and treatment, its giving of due weight to all sides of every question, and the fine Christian spirit which the writer discloses towards thinkers of various views. Readers will discover that Dr. Drummond puts his views in clear and unambiguous English, and expresses himself in a style that at once informs their minds and wins their respect and trust. The publishers have certainly done a great service to all students of Christianity in making these pages now accessible to the public.

"Dewsbury Memorial," by the Rev. Wm. Blazeby, B.A.; published by George Reveirs, 4 and 5, Greystoke Place, Fetter Lane, E.C.

This is a pamphlet of 40 pages, nicely bound in cloth, containing an account of the Rev. John Atlay, a Methodist Arian minister, a forerunner of the Unitarian cause in Dewsbury; with the after-story of the establishment and subsequent history of the Dewsbury Unitarian Church. The contents have previously appeared in the pages of "The Christian Life," except that now they are illustrated with no less than eleven portraits and pictures. Mr. Blazeby's pleasant and chatty style makes very agreeable reading, and in this historical sketch the Unitarians of Dewsbury and neighbourhood possess a valuable record of the growth and vicissitudes of the movement in which they have a warm and special local interest.

"Authority in Religious Belief," and other essays. London: British and Foreign Unitarian Association, Essex Hall, Essex Street, W.C. 2/- net.

These essays, by twelve Unitarian ministers, have appeared before, mostly in tract form, but now brought together in a handy volume, they make a very useful book on the various matters of belief therein considered. The names of the writers are a sufficient recommendation of the contents, including as they do such as Stopford Brooke, H. W. Crosskey, Brooke Herford, J. P. Hopps, Theodore Parker, Frank Walters, S. M. Crothers, L. P. Jacks, and others less widely known. This book will be found helpful to those seeking for light; it is good for propaganda purposes; and all persons whose minds are stirred with interest in "New Theology" may read these pages with great benefit. Like other volumes of the series, it is very suitable also for convinced Unitarians to confirm them in the faith they profess.

"The Essex Hall Year Book," 1908," 1/- net, is issued by the same publishers, and it is replete with up-to-date information and statistics concerning Unitarian Churches, Ministers, Colleges, and various other institutions associated therewith. It is the 19th year of issue of this most useful publication, and it is edited and compiled by the Rev. W. Copeland Bowie, whose work herein is well done in spite of the multifarious calls upon his time and energies in many directions as secretary of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. There are 370 Unitarian churches in the United Kingdom, but it is a question whether half that number purchase a copy of this annual. No church secretary should be without it.

"The Bible against Flesh Eating," by William Harrison. 1/-. 48, Upper Brook Street, Manchester.

This is an illustrated edition on art paper, with added notes and appendix, of a useful compilation previously noticed in these columns. The book is a triumph of industry, and bears witness to the earnestness and faith of the author. It is the first publication of its kind in Europe, and will no doubt be welcomed and appreciated by a wide and increasing number of persons interested in the ethics and religion of dietetic reform.

The Rev. Richard Newell, of Framlingham, Suffolk, has published "A Word in Season" on Small Holdings and Allotments—a four-page leaflet containing useful information how to make use of the new Act passed in 1907. It contains very good advice for the farm labourers and others for whom it is intended.

"Biblical Criticism has made the Bible a new book, and has at the same time utterly destroyed the crude and childish conception of the Bible on which the Old Theology of Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Westminster Divines, Thirty-nine Articles, Augsburg Confession, etc., was built; while the idea of Evolution in Religion, as in all things human, and of 'Law' as the method of Providence, has completely undermined the old conception of Dogma or miraculously communicated and attested truth to be received on 'authority." . . . Biblical Criticism has also driven us back to the starting point of Christianity, and has led us to see how far ecclesiastical and dogmatic Christianity has drifted from the spirit and teaching of the Master, and so it has led to a Revival of Religion."

—Rev. Dr. K. C. Anderson.

The Soul Wins.

By the Author of "Randal's Principle," "For All or None," &c.

CHAPTER II.

Peter Bream had good reasons for the faith that was in him, and his neighbour, McCracken, for the opposite opinion.

McCracken had a son, upon whom the greatest care had been bestowed. He had been blessed with good parents, who set him a good example, and yet, when Jim McCracken went out into the world, he went to the bad. Mr. McCracken might well say: "What is to be will be," for a kind of misfortune called "bad luck" seemed to dog his footsteps in spite of his own persistent and well-meant efforts to do the right thing.

"I say, Eliza, I scarce know what to do about our Jim," observed Mr. McCracken to his wife, one night at supper. "He's gone from bad to worse, and now I've got a letter from him to say that nothing can keep him out of prison if I don't send him a sum of money which I do not possess. He's disgraced us by his ways, and now he is in a fair way to ruin us. Whatever must we do?"

"Oh, John; do not say so!" rejoined his wife. "It may not be so bad as it seems. I'm sure he's not all bad. But how to send him the money I don't know."

"And I don't. Just think what a difference there is between our Jim and Will Pierce. Will has had everything against him; no good bringing up, and yet he has turned out as fine a fellow as you can meet anywhere, and our Jim, with everything in his favour, has gone to the dogs. I cannot understand it."

He looked up into his wife's face, and saw that she was weeping.

"Now, Eliza, don't give way like that; crying won't mend it."

But Mrs. McCracken went on weeping as if her heart would break.

The sight of her distress was more than her husband could endure without danger of breaking down utterly himself.

"What a confounded shame it is that our lad should cause us this misery. If I were not his father, I could curse him for his folly. Come, Eliza, do cease fretting, else I shall go mad!"

Just then a door opened and someone entered, and almost before they were aware of it, one in the form of a man was on his knees at the feet of Mrs. McCracken, with his face buried in her lap. It was the scapegrace, suddenly returned. He had heard what had been said; he had seen the wretchedness of his parents; he was on the point of going right away again out of very shame, when, under a sudden impulse of pity for the misery he had caused, he burst in and rushed to his mother as to a sanctuary.

"Oh, mother, do forgive me! I am a wretch to bring all this trouble upon you. I will do so no more. I will turn over a new leaf, and be a better son to you. Will you forgive me?"

The mother's arms were at once round her son's neck, and she kissed her erring boy, and she gazed at him through her tears.

"I will forgive you. And God grant you may be a better son."

"Yes, we hope you will be. If you knew how, month after month, our hearts have been sore on account of you, what miserable days and sleepless nights we have spent troubling about you," said the father, "you would be different out of very shame."

"I will be different, father. Trust me, and you shall see."

"What about this letter that's come to-day, and the money you want?"

"That letter was posted weeks ago, and if it's only come to-day, it's been lost or delayed. But it's no matter; I've got over that difficulty, and the money will not be required."

"Thank God for that!" said Mr. McCracken, heaving a great sigh of relief.

(To be continued.)

Young People Dedicated.

Recently at Bank Street Chapel, Bury, a Dedication and Reception Service was held, when 27 young people were welcomed into the membership of the Church by their Minister and the large congregation that was present. The minister gave an address upon the "Fuller and Freer Life," or the "Life more Abundant." Then he gave to each one the right hand of fellowship, the whole congregation standing meanwhile as a sign of their sympathy and support to these dedicated young lives. Each new member received a printed card commemorating the event before returning to their seats. At the close of the Dedication Service a Communion Service was held, when about 60 members and friends remained to join the newly received members. It is to be hoped that the whole service was as happy and helpful a time to the young friends, and the congregation generally, as it was to their Minister.

At Chowbent and other centres a similar reception of young people into Church membership has taken place, a practice to be commended to all our churches.

Visitation.

The following is taken almost word for word from the December calendar, Bank-street Chapel, Bury, Lancashire:—

THE VISITING COMMITTEE met to decide that the work of visitation should be undertaken at once. The need for some such organization has been felt by the Minister more and more as time has gone on: and he knows the advantage, by experience elsewhere, accruing from the assistance that such a band of workers can render him. It is practically imposs-

ible to keep in close touch with every one in a large constituency when it takes between two and three years to pay all the members pastoral visits,—on account of the multiplicity of engagements of varied character, and at various distances from each other. Even in cases of illness there is no means of direct information, for although patients send for their medical practitioner, their minister has to find out as best he can unless some thoughtful friend is good enough to inform him. But the advantage is not only for the minister: but such visitation is a bond of union, and keeps us in closer fellowship. It helps every one to be in closer touch with each other and with the church, as well as with the minister. Our lack of such union has given our churches the feeling of a crowd or "rabble" of isolated individuals, instead of that esprit-de-corps which characterises a loyal regiment. The best method for maintaining a close fellowship is undoubtedly the roll call. Members know exactly who are missing, are enabled to make inquiries, and are prevented from appearing indifferent towards their comrades. It is, however, out of the question in a church. But the next best thing to it, and which can be adopted in connection with a church, is regular visitation. A visit every six or twelve months by ladies of the congregation is of very little use. It is not always convenient to ask such visitors inside when they call, and such visits are sometimes resented. Again, this kind of visitation becomes extinct in a short time. Its object is not definite enough, and it lacks compulsion. The visits, to be of any good, must be made once a month at least, and in order to secure such regular calls there must be definite work to be done. All visitation committees, within our knowledge, have come to grief quickly unless they have had a magazine for distribution. This alone secures the regular visit, and prevents the committee becoming extinct in six or twelve months. This distribution of a magazine also helps to do away with one great objection to other kinds of visitation, viz., that the distributors need not always or ever be asked indoors, and need not accept if asked. The visit will be chiefly a call at the door, but it will just give the opportunity that is required of conveying or receiving information from or to the Church, its officers, and Minister. The magazine decided upon by the committee is "Unity," and in time that the visitation should begin in earnest in January of the New Year. The elected Secretary will be in attendance at the commencement of each month, in the library, to hand out the allotted number of magazines to each distributor. She will be glad to receive the names of volunteers for this work. A large number will be required so as to make the work as light as possible, and prevent its being a burden to any one. The magazines will be distributed free of charge, unless any one wishes to contribute towards their expense. Whenever any visitor learns that the presence or help of the Minister or any officer of the Church, is required, that visitor is expected to communicate such information to the desired quarter as soon as convenient or necessary.

To this it may be added that "Unity" is also distributed monthly from house to house by the Mill-street Free Church, Bradford, Manchester; the Moss Side Church, Manchester; the Kilburn Unitarian Church, London; and in smaller quantities by many others. This makes an occasion for visits and for getting into touch with people.

For Social Service.

THE MANUFACTURE OF ROGUES.

Let us consider another text from John Ruskin. In his little book, "Unto this Last," under Section 31, he has an instructive note which contains the following pregnant words:

"If you examine into the history of rogues, you will find that they are as truly manufactured articles as anything else, and it is just because our present system of political economy gives so large a stimulus to that manufacture that you may know it to be a false one. We had better seek for a system that will develop honest men, than for one which will deal cunningly with vagabonds. Let us reform our schools, and we shall find little reform needed in our prisons."

Is there not in these words matter for serious thought to the average Christian? The rogues constitute a great social difficulty. They are a source of danger and insecurity everywhere. What shall we do with them? What is our duty to them? Even the rogue is a human being having within him the divine nature, however deep therein it lies buried. We talk about saving souls. How can we save the soul of the rogue? He is our fellow-man. What is our obligation to him? and how can we truly discharge it? Are not these questions which every professing Christian should put to himself, believing "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," and that "he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen"? Here there is a bit of practical Christianity that admits of real application: How to love the rogue out of his roguery, or, in other words, how to save him from being a rogue.

John Ruskin says that he is a manufactured article. Is this true? Let the Social Service Study Circle investigate and see. And if it be found that the statement of Ruskin be true, there will immediately follow other questions: How is he manufactured? and by whom? These are matters of study which no true Christian can righteously ignore.

And if, as a result of such investigation, it be found that we are all partners—though unconsciously—in the making of rogues, we may then find out how to put an end to the making of such, on the principle that prevention is better than cure. Then, indeed, if we do prevent—what a grand social service it will be!

Like horses, we do not know whither we are going, nor why; but we do know, by pain, when we are going whither we should not; and by freedom, when we are going where we should. —Tolstoy.

Postal Mission Work.

By MISS FLORENCE HILL,
Hon. Sec. Central Postal Mission and Unitarian Workers 'Union.

Mrs. Reid, the hon. secretary of the Swansea Postal Mission writes:—"The most noticeable feature of this Mission this past year is the application for Unitarian literature from a group of young men living at Freetown, Sierra Leone. There are now seven in that town who have had tracts and pamphlets from time to time through the year, and in November, they wrote asking for books, which have been sent. These young men have been advised to form themselves into a Unitarian Reading Circle, and it is hoped then to obtain a grant of books for them from the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. The outcome of this movement will be watched with much interest. An advertisement in the 'Young Man' was the means by which they heard of the Swansea Postal Mission."

We should like to suggest to those Postal Mission secretaries who may have correspondents in Freetown, to communicate with Mrs. Reid to give the opportunity to others of joining this circle. The Central Postal Mission has several correspondents in Freetown, who, it is hoped may like to profit by such a circle.

It may interest your readers to know that there is a considerable group of Unitarian converts at Lagos, influenced mainly by a native doctor who during his sojourn in Edinburgh to take his degree, received a copy of Channing and other works from the Postal Mission. He visited Essex Hall, brought away a good stock of literature and circulated it with good results. A little theological lending library has been formed at Lagos with the help of the Postal Mission, which is doing a quiet, but useful work. We understand from some of the missionaries that our simple Unitarian faith commends itself to the uneducated men: they cannot understand the Trinity, or difficult metaphysical speculations, but the idea of an all powerful and merciful Father and the loving and tender man—Jesus of Nazareth—appeals strongly to them. Some of the missionaries have asked why we no not send out Unitarian missionaries.

Among the many kind New Year's greetings received, came one from an Englishman living in a remote part of the Transvaal, to whom papers, sermons, and tracts are most acceptable; he has now adopted liberal religious principles, but when he wrote a few years ago, he was troubled about the question of Eternal Punishment, and wrote:—"Living in this lonely place makes one think for oneself; people will not take religion seriously as long as they are taught that God's love shows itself in the torment of the many and salvation of the very few." His last letter gives such an interesting account of the present condition of the Transvaal, I venture to quote it in full. The illustrated annual he sent contained interesting pictures of Zulu children and chiefs, an animated and intelligent group, well grown, and heads well shaped. There is evidently great capacity in this race, and we feel deep sympathy with Miss Colenso in her brave championship of these men, for whom her father, the Bishop, did so much in old times. The letter runs as follows:—

"Accept my best thanks for the "Inquirer," which regularly arrives, and for which I am greatly obliged, also for the package containing the "Unity," and three sermons, these I have not yet read, but am keeping them for perusal on a quiet Sunday. It is exceedingly kind of you to send me such a good supply of reading matter, and of a sort, too, that is not easily procured here. It certainly looks as if the present Liberal Government's experiment of granting responsible government to the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, is going to turn out a great success, at any rate as far as the Transvaal is concerned (for I cannot speak from personal knowledge of the O.R.C.), as, since our present Government has been installed, I notice that the Boers seem decidedly more contented, and so are the older British inhabitants, for it is the latter, and not the Boers, who have been the greatest grumblers since the war. The policy of retrenchment that the Government (our Government, I mean) is pursuing, is only what is necessary, as, while one of the standing causes of complaints against the late Kruger Government was the number of the officials, under the British administration, one saw more officials everywhere than even under the Kruger Government. With Responsible Government, a great many of these unnecessary officials have to go, a certain amount of hardship for the few, it is true, but to the benefit of the country in general.

We are hoping that the period of depression through which we are passing will soon come to an end. There is no doubt that it has been wholesome, if unpleasant, discipline for the country in general. I think that conditions will improve as the country produces more food stuffs and other commodities, instead of importing them; and year by year it is doing this. But a great deal too much money still goes out of South Africa for milk, butter, bacon, soap, flour, and other things which might be produced here, and the production of which, here, would mean the circulation of a great deal of money in South Africa which at present is sent away to other countries. Still I believe conditions are improving, and, as railways are extended, and bring different food-producing districts of the country into touch with consumers, I trust the state of the country will gradually improve, for there is no denying that at present there is a very great deal of distress in South Africa.

By this post I am sending you one of the Transvaal Annuals.

Wishing you a very happy and prosperous New Year, and every success in your work, and again thanking you."

"UNITY."—Editor: H. Bodell Smith. One copy, post free, 1½d., or 1/6 a year; 12 for 9d., or 9/- a year. All communications for Publisher or Editor to Parsonage, Mottram, Manchester.

Notes and News.

Unitarian services are to be started at Watford; the Rev. J. Birks has been giving courses of doctrinal sermons at Great Yarmouth, and has had requests for more; the Rev. Joseph Wood, President, National Conference, has been discussing "Our Great Problem" in "The Inquirer," to the effect that our churches are weak, because they lack spiritual life, do not make enough of the natural human Christ, are afflicted with exaggerated individuality, and neglect mutual help; at the same time another writer, "Eleutheros," has a series of articles running in "The Christian Life" on "The Unitarian movement," in which what it is and what it ought to be, are subjects for detailed consideration.

It is said that these questions of denominational condition are likely to be thoroughly debated in our two weeklies, and that there is going to be a general wakening up amongst us. Anyway, Field Agent the Rev. T. P. Spedding is busy with preparations for the next Van Mission season; he is also in great request for winter missionary visits to churches in various parts of the country; the demands are so numerous upon him that he feels there is work for several more men on such field work in addition to himself.

When is the wakening coming? It is coming all the time, no doubt. Cannot everybody see it and feel it? Will it be seen at the B. and F.U. Association meetings at Liverpool on Feb. 20th and 21st, and later on at the Whit-week meetings? And more fully when we reach the National Conference in April next year?

The East Cheshire Christian Union will hold its annual meetings at Dukinfield, Feb. 15th. This Union is conducting a series of week-night lectures at Marple, Cheshire, with success and good promise of a permanent movement; also another course is being arranged at Hanley in the Potteries by this Union, to follow up the splendid Van meetings held there last season. The Crewe Church reports a considerable strengthening in consequence of the Van work in that town. A United Mission of the four churches of Ashton, Mossley, Mottram, and Stalybridge is arranged for four week-ends in February.

Various changes, actual and impending, are reported. Rev. R. H. Lambley, M.A., from Melbourne, Australia, formerly of Todmorden and Glossop, has entered upon the ministry with the church at Horwich; Rev. A. Bennett, M.A , has resigned at Monton; the Rev. J. Morgan Whiteman resigned at Burnley to go to Chatham; and the Rev. Alfred Thompson has resigned at Dudley.

The Rev. Prof. C. B. Upton, B.A., B.Sc., is to be presented with his portrait at Manchester College, Oxford, subscribed for by his old students; the third international Congress on the History of Religions is to be held at Oxford in September; the beautiful new church of the Messiah (Unitarian), Montreal, Canada, has just been dedicated and opened; the Rev. Alva Richards, Unitarian, of Gellionen and Trebanos, Swansea, has been presented with New Year's gifts, by the semi-national Eisteddfod authorities, of a chair, value seven guineas, also five guineas besides, for composition of a Welsh poem, and this follows on the reception of previous gifts for other brilliant triumphs in Welsh poetry.

At Bolton, Bank Street Church, 35 new adult members joined during 1907, and 44 juniors; at Hastings a Guild of the Christian Life has been established; at Todmorden two Sunday scholars in the Unitarian School have won gold medals for 10 years' unbroken attendance, 12 others silver medals for five years unbroken, while one is reported as having never missed for 18 years; the Rev. E. T. Russell, B.A., of Glasgow, has been visiting Coatbridge as McQuaker lecturer; Principal Estlin Carpenter has lectured before the Yorkshire Unitarian Club on "An Ancient Hindoo University"; the Rev. W. W. C. Pope, of Lewisham, it appears, is wanted at Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, by the Unitarians there, who wish to secure him as their minister; the Rev. H. Williamson, Dundee, is president of a Mill and Factory Operatives' Union, and has just presided over the 22nd annual meeting of that body at a large gathering of 1,500 people.

There have been Whittier centennial celebrations in various places; the centenary of the birth of the Rev. John Hamilton Thom, Jan. 10th, has received special notice in the press and in some Unitarian churches; the late Mr. Herbert Marsland, Stockport, bequeathed £2,000 to institutions, including £100 to the Stockport Unitarian Church, £100 to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and £500 to Anti-Vivisection Societies.

There have been Christmas and New Year parties at many of the churches; and sales of work have been held at Padiham realising £125, Burnley £100, Burnley Lane Mission £12, Richmond (Surrey) £41, Aberdeen £50—60, Heywood £112, Cake and apron sale, Blackpool, £25, Mottram £26, Christmas Fair, Stockport, £16, Essex Church Girls' Club in aid of a hospital £20, Todmorden fete for Sunday School funds £45, Preston £135, bazaar, Dukinfield, £1,350.

The death roll includes Mr. W. Gibson, J.P., Moneyrea, Co. Down; Mr. Ben Robinson, Crewe, Dec. 26th, engine driver, L. and N.W. royal trains, and treasurer Crewe Unitarian Church; Mr. Ald. Sutcliffe Firth, J.P., Heywood, Dec. 30th, aged 83, superintendent Unitarian Sunday School from 1860 up to his death, and Mayor of the borough two years; Lord Kelvin, the greatest British scientist of the 19th century, formerly Sir Wm. Thomson, Dec. 17th, aged 83.

The Accrington Church is preparing to celebrate its jubilee in 1909 by raising £1,800 Independence Fund, to enable it to dispense with grant aid from the District Association (N. and E. Lancashire Unitarian Mission); and a total of £1,150 has been secured, with the assistance of a legacy of £500 from Mrs. Grundy of Summerseat, £250 from N. and E. Lancashire Unitarian Mission, and £400 from members of the congregation; strenuous efforts being made to raise the rest.

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BRITISH & FOREIGN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

MEETINGS AT LIVERPOOL

Thursday and Friday, 20th and 21st February, 1908.

ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS.

Thursday, 20th February.

3—4. Reception by the Liverpool Committee.
4—5. Opening Proceedings with Short Speeches.
5—6. Tea for Delegates and Ministers.
6—7-30. Open Conference of the Ministerial Fellowship.
7-30—9-30. Meeting arranged by the Sunday School Assoc.

Note.—The Thursday Meetings, except the Tea, will be held in the Hall of the Domestic Mission, Mill St.

Friday, 21st February.

10—11-15. Religious Service, Hope St. Church. Preacher: The Rev. J. H. Weatherall, M.A.

11-30—1. Conference on "Women's Work in connexion with our Churches," introduced by Miss Helen Brooke Herford and Mrs. G. C. Cressey (formerly of Portland, U.S.A.)

1—2-30. Luncheon.

3—4. Conference on "Social Questions in Relation to our Churches," introduced by the Rev. Charles Peach.

4—6. Conference on Missionary Work: (1) Work in direct connexion with our Churches, introduced by the Rev. C. J. Street, M.A., LL.B. (2) Work in relation to those Outside the Churches, introduced by the Rev. T. P. Spedding.

6—7. Tea.

7-30—9-30. Public Meeting. Chairman: Sir W. B. Bowring, Bart. (President of the Association). Speakers: Mr. Howard Chatfeild Clarke (Treasurer); Rev. W. Copeland Bowie (Secretary); Rev. Charles Hargrove, M.A.; Mr. John Harrison; Mr. H. B. Lawford; Rev. W. G. Tarrant, B.A., and others.

It is hoped that M. Paul Sabatier will be present and deliver an address at this Meeting.

Note.—The Friday afternoon Conferences and the evening Meeting will be held at the Ullet Road Church Hall.

Ministers, Delegates of District and Local Societies, and the members of Churches throughout the district are cordially invited to be present. Efforts will be made to provide hospitality for Ministers and Delegates who send their names to Mr. B. P. Burroughs, 15, Sweeting Street, Liverpool, *not later than Tuesday, 11th February.*

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